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Billings seminar examines global business prospects

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Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Billings seminar examines global business prospects" (1998). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 15139.
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NEWS RELEASE

This release is available electronically on INN (News Net.)

Jan. 22, 1998

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BILLINGS SEMINAR EXAMINES GLOBAL BUSINESS PROSPECTS

MISSOULA --

As the 21st Century draws near, Montana businesses will find new opportunities in the global marketplace, according to a University of Montana-Missoula economist.

The world is experiencing rapid economic and population growth, especially in developing regions, and Montana may benefit from this growth, said Paul Polzin, director of UM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

"Rapid growth in developing countries will change the composition of world trade in the next five years," Polzin said. "As people in these countries become more prosperous, their needs will change. There will be a huge demand for basic commodities such as wheat, oil, sawlogs and minerals, and Montana businesses may be able to help supply these commodities."

The topics and others will be explored during the bureau's 23rd Annual Economic Outlook Seminar in **Billings** on Tuesday, Feb. 3, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Radisson Northern Hotel. Experts will discuss worldwide opportunities, potential risks and the strategies needed to help Montana businesses succeed in the world market.

At this year's seminar — titled "Global Strategies: What's Montana's Move?" — Polzin will examine global trends and how they will likely impact Montana over the next few years. He also will present economic forecasts for the entire state and the Helena area.

In Billings, economic growth peaked in the early 1990s and decelerated to about 2 percent by 1995. Growth will be in the 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent range from 1997 to 2000. Additional detailed economic data will be examined at the seminar. Professor David Taylor of the University of Wyoming will expand on local-area trends and forecasts.

A special feature of this year's seminar will be a panel of industry experts. They will discuss how worldwide trends will affect Montana industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, non-resident travel, oil and gas, and wood products.

Another seminar topic is health care. Steve Seninger, the bureau's director of health care industry research, will focus on mortality rates, costs, markets, how many people are insured and where they go for medical treatment.

Finally, luncheon speaker Arnold Sherman will return to the global economy. Sherman, executive director of UM's Montana World Trade Center, has more than a decade of hands-on experience helping American companies establish themselves in some of the toughest emerging markets around the world. He will talk about challenges and opportunities for Montana businesses in the global marketplace.

Registration is \$70 and includes the seminar, a proceedings booklet, lunch and a one-year subscription to the Montana Business Quarterly. Continuing education credits are available with a \$20 processing fee. For more information or to register, write: The Bureau of Business and Economic Research, School of Business Administration, The University of Montana-Missoula, Missoula, Mont., 59812, or call: (406) 243-5113.

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Note: The seminar booklet will be available on Tuesday, Jan. 27. Call the bureau to request a copy.

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Billings Gazette
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